

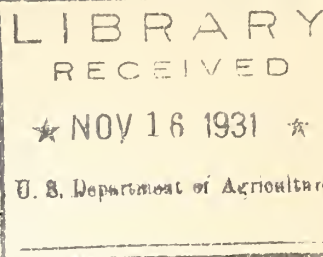
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United States Department of Agriculture  
Bureau of Biological Survey



INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTORS OF REPRODUCTIVE  
ORGANS OF WILD ANIMALS

Please record the data asked for on the attached form. Prepare in duplicate and inclose one copy of this information with each specimen and send one copy with a full report to the Washington office direct.

As soon as possible after killing the animal, remove the genital tract. Lay the carcass on its back and slit the belly wall in the mid-line from navel as far back as possible (to pelvic bone). With a knife it is possible to cut through the gristle of the symphysis (joint of pelvic bone in mid-line). With this done, the bones can be spread apart, exposing the bladder and (if female) the vagina. Grasp vagina at its hairy external opening and trim it loose from the rectum, following forward to where the uterus divides into its two horns. It would be well to open the belly widely and push the bowels away. Gently lifting the reproductive organs up as far as they are now trimmed loose, continue to free the horns of the uterus with knife or scissors. At their ends are the ovaries, usually imbedded in fat, hence not always readily found. The uterine horns will guide you to them. If the animal is pregnant and the babies (fetuses) are good size, open the chambers containing them. Preserve the small embryos, but measure or estimate the size of the larger fetuses. This record is of great importance for the Division records.

Now as to preservative. Formalin is the most practicable. The commercial formalin should be 40% formaldehyde. Use 1 part of this to 9 of water; the result is a 10% solution of formalin or a 4% solution of formaldehyde. The amount to use is about 10 times the volume of the tissues to be preserved, which should be shipped in the fluid. Bottles in mailing tubes, or ordinary tin, friction-top, new paint cans will do to ship in.

Specimens may be crowded together in shipping if they have been first fixed in plenty of fluid for a couple of days. Thus, one may need 3 one-pint cans to fix these 3 specimens. But after several days these 3 could be placed in one container for shipment. Of course, each specimen should be labelled, and may be separated from the others by first wrapping each in cheese-cloth. No specimen should be shipped dry, but always with fluid (10% formalin) around it.

Since the object of collecting and studying the specimens sent in to the Bureau is to find out more about the breeding habits of fur animals in the wild, and since the organs have to be prepared for microscopical examination, it is apparent that too much care can not be given to the proper fixation and preparation of the organs as set forth above.

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